**The Geometry of Lines** Name:

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Let’s talk about lines. ☺

**Part 1: Parallelism**

1. What does it mean for lines to be parallel? Describe and draw below:

2. How would you decide whether lines are parallel?

Euclid, an Ancient Greek geometer who developed the math you’ll be studying in this course*,* defined parallel lines as lines that never meet, even when extended indefinitely (on and on and on…). Line segments are parallel if they lie on parallel lines.

It was hard for the Greeks, though, to determine if lines were parallel — after all, how could you show *for sure* that lines never met? What if you thought that lines were parallel, but actually they met at a point 100 miles away? This would happen if lines were very close to being parallel, but not quite.

Here’s an example of this:



These lines may look parallel, but they actually aren’t—one line is slightly “off.”

3. Stop for a sec: how can you make sense of this? How can we tell FOR SURE that lines are parallel?

In the 1600s, the French mathematician and philosopher Rene Descartes changed the way people thought about — and did — geometry. The story goes that he was lying in bed one day, staring at the ceiling, and realized that he could describe the position of a bug on his ceiling by counting the number of ceiling cracks up and the number of ceiling cracks over.

He developed the coordinate plane that we use today—which helps not only with making graphs, but tracking position and much more. Descartes essentially found a way to bring algebra and geometry together.

(However: the Ancient Greeks developed the ideas of latitude and longitude and using lines to determine positions of cities, and that’s a precursor of the coordinate system.)

But I digress!

4. Let’s be like Descartes and put lines on a grid.

How could we use this grid to figure out whether the lines are parallel?



Final side note:

Descartes’s idea allowed someone to take a geometric shape — like a line — and describe its position *exactly* by putting a grid on top of it — a coordinate system. Since these coordinates had numbers attached, all of the sudden people were able to apply much of what they already knew about algebra to geometry. Descartes had allowed people to use multiple points of view when considering geometry problems, switching freely back and forth between an algebraic perspective and a geometric perspective. And, when you thought about #4, so did you!

1. Calculate the slope of each line in each of the sets below. Write them on the chart on the next page.





**Part 2: More Parallelism**

Slope:



3. Look at the table. What do you notice?

4. Based on what you saw in the table, what can we say about parallel lines?

**BIG IDEA: Parallel lines…** (don’t write here until we discuss it together)

**Part 3: Perpendicular Lines**

What about lines that are perpendicular to each other — that is, lines that cross at a 90 degree angle?

1. First, think/discuss:

* Can two lines, each with positive slope, be perpendicular?
* Can two lines, each with a negative slope, be perpendicular?

2. Calculate the slope of each line in each of the sets below. Write them in the table.



Slopes:



3. After you finish #2, analyze your table. Something special happens for slopes of perpendicular lines. What is it?

**BIG IDEA: Perpendicular lines…** (don’t write here until we discuss it together)

**Part 4: Some Algebra**

Remember equations of lines…like these?

a) y = -2x – 6 b) y = 4x + 2 c) y = -5x – 10 d) y = (5/6)x + 112 etc…

1. What’s the slope of each line above?

2. Write the equations of two lines that are parallel to each other (make these up):

3. Write the equations of two lines that are perpendicular to each other (make these up):